Elections of Pakistan and Response of Social Scientists: 
A Study of Theoretical Understandings

M. Javaid Akhtar 
Lecturer, Department of Pakistan Studies, 
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan

Sajid Mahmood Awan 
Senior Research Fellow, 
National Institute of Historical & Cultural Research (NIHCR), 
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan 

Shuja-ul-Haq 
Foreign Faculty Member, 
National Institute of Pak. Studies, 
Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Abstract 
The study of politics and political behavior of Pakistan has been generalized by the foreign and indigenous scholars with their particular perspective without giving empirical observation except a few. Politics is the manifestation of political activity that had been the outcome of political will and it will peeped into the social setup to observe that how the voters are being groomed and inducted into political values. The question of judging the observation of different scholars will be evaluated in the paradigm of new modern developments where objective reality exists and subject matter varies. Most of the scholars have given their sweeping explanations that voters of Pakistan are not mature enough in their voting decisions. In this article it will be analyzed that how they have conclude their observations and what are the parameters in which they have locus-standi to make the statements. Sharief-ul-Mujahid to Andrew Wilder all has given their observation about the electoral behavior of Pakistan’s voters that is more descriptive and explanatory. They expressed the general features of electoral discourse without behavioral analysis. In this article it has been analyzed that what kind of research methods and theoretical premise have been hired by the social science researcher in Pakistan to judge the electoral behavior of voters.

Key Words: Study of Elections (psephology); Electoral Behavior; Paradigmatic View of Social Scientists; Social and Political Determinants of Electoral Behavior.

I. General Explanation of the Election Question
Voter’s electoral behaviour is a function of multiple influences which are categorized under the heads of subjective considerations, ecological influences and other utility concerns. Political behaviour is a function of all these situations in which actors find themselves and bring out their underlying predispositions. In these circumstances there is push-pull relationship among the multifaceted influences of candidates, parties,
issues over each other and of the other ones which are characterized as caste, race, language, class, religion, ideology, family, and local intercommunicative channels on the choice of the voter. The question of candidate, party and issue relationship and voters’ attitudinal response to them is pertinent to our discussion in the studies of writings of different scholars who did their research on the elections of Pakistan to judge their academic strength in this field of politics.

In this research article position of the social scientists will be identified over these factors, and it will also be tried to know their ideological embedded scholarly position under which they had analyzed this political phenomenon.

In the United States of America and in the West as well, the study of elections and electoral behaviour is designed by the researcher and social scientists through the correlation of variables to expose the hypothetical sense of their research. The relationship between the dependent and independent variables had also set the limitations of the research and facilitate to understand the epistemic grounds of investigation of the particular political activity. It is also being indicated that in the study of election candidate is denominated by the female pronoun(she) and voter is by the male pronoun(he), but in Pakistani context this application is confused also.

The nature of Pakistani voter’s behaviour can possibly be evaluated and understood through the analysis of election results, which are available in the form of quantitative data published by the election commission of Pakistan. Some of the theoretical models have been put into test to understand the intellectual depth of Pakistani social scientists. Some of the quantitative methods seemingly had also been in operation to develop the empirical model at a constituency level by survey method—interview and questionnaire. In this study it will also observed that how far the social scientists of Pakistan are keen in adopting any of these methods to do their study.

II. Conceptual Understanding of the Election and Models of Electoral Behaviour

Elections are considered the main stage from which the edifice of modern democracy has been erected. Some of the electoral studies have been conducted in America and Britian in 1940s and 50s, and after that it is a field of specialization in social science.1 The study of ‘elections’ after that has been described as ‘psephology’2(Norman D.Palmer,1975) and this term was coined by Professor R.B.McCallum in connection with the first of the Nuffield studies of British general elections. Professor W.J.M.Mackenzie in 1958 described about the elections that they are complicated political processes which are analyzed within the context of political and social system. V.O.Key,Jr wrote that ‘election is a formal act of collective decision

---


2 Psephos is a Greek word which means pebble and it was the mode in which ancient Athenians cast their vote.
that occurs in a stream of connected antecedents and subsequent behaviour’(V.O.Key,Jr,1955). Elections are the justified ways and means for the transfer of government from one set up to other. It has the function of representing the political choice of the masses and creates the connectivity between the public and the government through policy structure. So these are the general description about the election to understand its practical nature in any of the political system which is rooted in liberal democracy. Some of the others also took interest to study the relevant object like the political parties which are the essential part of the system in furthering the agenda of the nation or the community from local to state level. Political parties worked as interdependent variable between the masses and the electoral activity and for this part they are considered important object of investigation in the field of electoral study. In this paper it is also point of concern that how far Pakistani social scientists did notice the influence of these elements over the psyche of the voters. Some of the American and western scholars took keen interest to analyze the role of different factors which had a determining character in voters decisions.

James N. Rosenau suggestively advanced the role of election in a model explaining the strength of political parties in their varying positions likely from dependent variable to independent variable (James N. Rosenau,1973). Robert E. Lane also developed a useful paradigm for the study of electoral behaviour in which ‘responses’ represent collectively and individually the dependent variables. These responses of voters’ emerged on the basis of needs, aspirations, and demands which are raised by the party or the social milieu in which a man resides. He listed social or environmental factors under stimuli which represented the independent variables(Robert E.Lane,1959).

Proximity models and directional models also considered suitable to establish a baseline to judge the electoral behaviour. Anthony Downs was the pioneer of this spatial and proximity models in which he described that interdependence are judged between the decisions made by parties and those made by voters. In this model issue positions of both voters and candidates are translated into voter’s preferences and candidate strategy. In this model other factors are also calculated as : whether a candidate’s direction of movement from the status quo can be expected to bring the new status quo closer to the voter; some voters may be much more concerned with outcomes on certain issues than on others; the issue positions that voters ascribe to particular candidates need not be the positions that a candidate formally espouses. Voters may discount platforms by taking into account the likelihood that particular policies will actually be implemented (Samuel Merrill iii & Bernard Grofman,1999,p.5). Anthony Down seemingly convinced about the utility nature of man as a rational being who effectively weigh the cost-benefit ratio of his/her voting decision. He described the position of voter in terms of his/her concerns in the context of electoral activity which exposed the bases of his learning and understanding this particular part of political behaviour. One of the underlying statement of Anthony Down depicts the value of his knowledge of the relationship between the voter’s decision and his/her embedded surroundings— “…[the voter] knows that no party will be able to do very thing that it says it will do. Hence, he cannot merely compare platforms; instead he must estimate in his own mind what the parties would actually do were they in power”(Samuel Merrill iii & Bernard Grofman,1999,p.19). This judgment showed that how closely he examined the phenomenon of electoral activity.
Anthony Down’s second model is the ‘Directional Model’ which is alternative of proximity framework. He applied this model also to understand the activity of election and voters’ response to it. It also gives the voter choice on the basis of utility but that utility is achieved only through the function of the belief about the object, and policy stance by the candidate or the party and the evaluation of the voters of their policy considerations. It counts the direction of the policy movement desired by a voter from a status quo point or a policy neutral point—with the direction of policy movement espoused by a candidate (Samuel Merrill iii & Bernard Grofman,1999,pp.23-24).

Some of the other approaches have also been discussed to provide the intellectual strength for the understanding of this particular field of politics and as well the nature of produced knowledge in this realm. These approaches emerged to keep in view the influences of primordial elements like that of cast and race etc. There are two leading approaches to understand the role of caste in political system. The first approach, represented primarily by the Indian anthropologist Srinavasa, focused on the way castes in British India were able to organize themselves into broad-based associations spread across villages and districts. These associations emerged as informal institutional networks, which became harmonized with new political institutions (Muhammad Waseem,1994). The second approach, Weiner-Rudolph’s model, looks at the impact of new political ideology on caste and the latter’s induction into politics. According to this approach, castes, through reincarnation process, have become associations through which Indians are ‘being homogenized, secularized, and democratized. Thus, castes continue to occupy the most significant position in the electoral politics, followed by such concerns as nature of local leadership, emergence of factions and issues of commune (Muhammad Waseem,1994).

These were the general theoretical models which had been functional in the domain of electoral politics to understand the electoral behavior of voters. In this study it is focusing knot to determine the paradigmatic position of social scientists about the electoral behavior of Pakistani voters. This study will also help us to know the general features of electoral behavior and patterns of operating system.

III. Historical Context of Elections in Pakistan

Review of elections provides an insight into historical evolution of modern democracy and first past the post system in Sub-continent. After establishing their rule British introduced the responsible government and for which they introduced the local system for the political education of the people of Sub-continent. British introduced the principle of election in 1884 in local bodies at limited scale, and later in 1909 and 1919 reforms a responsible government was introduced at province level. Before the partition of sub-continent in 1947 the regions of Punjab, Sindh and NWFP of Pakistan have gone through the activity of elections in 1937 and in 1946. Elections in these regions have aroused the political consciousness of the people and they were mobilized by the parties in attaining the goals which they have set for them. The parliamentary bodies which governed Pakistan following independence in August 1947 derived from the provincial elections held in British India in late 1945 and early 1946. These elections were held under the restricted franchise and separate electorate provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935. These assemblies were called upon to elect members of a Constituent Assembly (MCA) of India in July 1946. The MCA’s were thus elected by an indirect
method according to a formula of separate representation for each of the major religious communities. The Muslim League MCA's boycotted the sessions which began in New Delhi on December 9, 1946. It was not until the partition of India had taken place and the Constituent Assembly itself divided that the active work of drafting a constitution for the two independent successor states began in earnest. Those members remaining in India met in New Delhi and completed a constitution in about two and a half years. Those members opting for Pakistan convened in the new nation's capital, and began a longer quest for a constitutional document (Craig Baxter, 1971, p. 198).

Pakistan experienced the first general elections on the basis of adult franchise in 1970 but before that it has gone through the indirect elections of 1965. It has also seen the provincial elections in 1951 in Punjab and erstwhile NWFP; in Sindh in 1953 and in Bengal in 1954. The constituent assembly was indirectly elected by the members of the provincial assemblies. The date of the first general election was announced after the making of first constitution of Pakistan in 1956. This constitution was functional in less than two years and finally it was aborted when Ayub Khan proclaimed the martial law in 1958.

Between 1946 and 1954 much had happened to the composition of the provincial assemblies. The 1945-46 provincial elections had provided the Muslim League with substantial majorities among the Muslim members of the assemblies in Punjab and East Bengal. In Sind, however, the Muslim membership was sharply divided on factional lines, while in the Frontier a Congress government under Dr. Khan Sahib was the in-charge of the affairs (Granville Austin, 1966). Provincial elections on a universal franchise basis were held in Punjab and Frontier in 1951, and in Sind in 1953, each returning the Muslim League with substantial majorities. The 1954 provincial election in East Bengal, however, resulted in a crushing defeat for the Muslim League by the United Front, comprising principally the Krishak Sramik Party led by A. K. Fazlul Huq, Awami League by H. S. Suhrawardy and the Nizam-i-Islam Party (Craig Baxter, 1971, p. 199). The United Front won 223 of 237 Muslim seats, not only producing a result "almost beyond belief, both to the League and the United Front," (Keith Callard, 1958, p. 58) but also depriving many of the Bengali members of the Constituent Assembly of their support.

IV. Rationale of the Study

In this historical background some of the features of elections and behavior of voters had emerged which was socialized in the emerging democratic values of west. The study of voting behavior in Pakistan is relatively scarce. Only in countries, where elections have been conducted regularly and studied comprehensively, we find a mature tradition of voting behaviour analysis.

Such sociological categories as village community, caste-like institution of biradari are common features of peasant society in Pakistan. These features due to their traditional role were in conflict with modern political institutions like political parties, elections and parliamentary sovereignty. The question here rises that how far researchers and social scientists have tried to conceptualize the role of these socio-political variables and their influence over the psyche of voters of Pakistan. It is seemingly categorized that individual voter’s decision is influenced by political activity at various levels ranging from village constituency to district and state. This interaction between micro and macro level activity provides clue to the emergence of different patterns of electoral behaviour.
The society of Pakistan tends to produce a pattern of interaction which is manifested at village, district to province and state level in the modern administrative hierarchy. The tribal structure of Balochistan and NWFP province likely produced the pattern of voting behaviour not thoroughly dominated by primary loyalties, and seemingly oscillated between different considerations which may have the character of regional and national concerns. The possible attitudinal similarity of the people of four provinces of Pakistan can expose the character of political culture of Pakistan and in turn will be helpful to denote it as mature or immature. The political behavior of the people has either been put under empirical observation by the social scientists to formulate any kind of rational design to judge the electoral behavior of the voters of Pakistan. It is an assumptive quest that will facilitate to mark the political orientation of the people of Pakistan.

It is also necessary to know and judge the role of political parties in the political context of Pakistan to create a mechanism by which voters are mobilized to be the part of political system. How far social scientists had been succeeded in determine the value of political party in this intercommunicative process between the voters and the system. Political parties are the centre around them major portion of political activity revolves and the explanation of electoral activity becomes clear and explicit to know the roles of social and political variables. This is an elementary role of political parties in the electoral activity, which is under examination to determine the nature of political culture. Marx and Weber commend that groups in which individuals find themselves, shape and determine the character of political activities (Anthony M. Orum, 1979). So here in the debate it is the question that how the social scientists perceived the role of political party in electioneering campaign.

V. The Psephology of Pakistan and the Response of Social Scientists

This study is relevant to identify the position of Pakistan’s social scientists in regarding to the above cited theories and models to determining the general behavior of the voters. They did their work on the elections and electoral politics of Pakistan but still their methodological and theoretical stance is as such not visible by which it could be said that they have worked in a particular pattern or in the paradigm. It is difficult to judge the voters’ decision making under different influences but some of the studies indicate general trends which coined the terms of system’s stability or instability and behavioral maturity or its immaturity.

Among the studies which are extensive and more specific to electoral analysis has been done by Muhammad Waseem, The 1993 Elections in Pakistan in 1994; Democratization in Pakistan: A Study of 2002 Elections and a work by Andrew R. Wilder in the name of The Pakistani Voter in 1999. They cited some models and gave references to some theories which had been established in the west and in the United States of America in the name of Columbia school, Michigan school, and the Rationalist school led by Anthony Downs to judge the electoral behavior of voters (Muhammad Waseem, 1994). Columbia school introduced the method of sample survey for the study of voting. It developed that people’s social neighborhood and membership of other groups determine their voting behaviour. The sociological approach tends to overrule the significance of dynamic and short term individual responses to external stimuli such as election campaign in favour of relatively passive and long term group identities which impinge on the electoral choice rather indirectly. Michigan school brought back the individual as the primary voting unit into the analysis of electors’ choice. The reputed...
social scientists produced their research over the issue of election in the context of Pakistan are following, and theirs’ work has been analyzed to establish the view about their academic strength in the field of electoral study. They are K.B. Sayeed, Sharief-ul-Mujahid, Shahid Javed Burki, Craig Baxter, Norman D. Palmer, M.G. Weinbaum, Rasul Bux Rais and Lawrence Ziring.

The people of Pakistan have witnessed different political periods in which they have observed the elections of different nature. They have taken the active part in the elections as electors and electorates. It means that they have been socialized in the electorate system. But how far they were justified in their political decisions; it is being explored by different scholars of Pakistan in different time periods. In the debate of political behaviour we come across the studies and the models which had been evolved in west and to see that how far they had been applied by social scientists in the context of Pakistan for identifying the patterns of political behaviour.

Professor Sharief-ul-Mujhid in his article ‘The 1977 Pakistani Elections: An Analysis’ in the edit book Contemporary Pakistan by Manzooruddin Ahmed described the general patterns of elections not of voting behaviour. In this article there were no such methodological grounds by which voters voting decision could be identified in some of its patterns to recognize the systemic structures and value patterns of Pakistan’s society. He took the paraphernalia in his analysis of elections 1977 like the nature of the administrative setup as the machinery of election administration and its networking in the regions; the number of contestants against the seat of national and provincial assemblies; parties manifestos and their issue concerns without evaluating its connectivity with the voters; and general context of the political circumstances in which election was conducted. He indeed talked about the importance of election in the form of collective decision in the political process and its role to bring into focus the nature of political culture, the cross currents of nationalism and sub nationalisms and the continuing impact of pressure and interest associational groups (Manzooruddin Ahmed, 1982). But he did not manifest any methodological relationship between or among these factors to identify the position of the voters in the ambit of his/her voting decision. His style of study is seemingly more descriptive rather than exploratory. Professor Sharief-ul-Mujhid in three of his articles on the election namely: ‘Pakistan’s First Presidential Elections’; ‘The Assembly Elections in Pakistan’; and ‘Pakistan: First General Elections’ took up the similar approach as has been described above to address the elections in their political atmosphere rather than have any thrust on the factors of influence over voters’ decisions in elections. He is seemingly idealistic in his approach to judge the voters’ decision by calculating the influence of ecological factors concerning the issues of national or ideological importance rather than impinging on the subjective considerations (Sharief-ul-Mujhid, 1965, 1971). It indeed reflects the mature political sense of the researcher to highlight the penetrating influence of the contributing factors in the decision of the voters but he could not attempt to relate these factors at empirical level. He could not generate the data at voters’ level to augment his argument. This way of explanation of election simply indicates that author is less equipped with the quantitative methods of inquiry and deliberately bent down on the normative judgments for the explanation of the election.

Shahid Javed Burki and Craig Baxter in their research Article on “Socio-Economic Indicators of the People’s Party Vote in the Punjab: A Study at the Tehsil Level” sought the effects of geni-coefficients on the voters’ voting decision. In this approach they analyzed the level and growth of socio-economic development at the unit of
tehsil (W.H.Wriggins, 1975). They visualized that higher the level of development of socio-economic indicators there is more tendency of voters’ inclination toward political party. As they have analyzed the election 1970 so it was the Pakistan Peoples Party which was on voters’ choice list. On the basis of their model they noted that voter is very much sensitive to the issues of utility. Their model of research have had three characteristics viz., urbanization, industrialization, and education which were considered social determinants to analyze the voting trends but their analysis of voting behaviour lacked the influence of political determinants. They also observed that there is the decline of the influence of the traditional structures like the biradri and feudalism over voters’ choice but failed to get the qualitative and quantitative evidence to approve or disprove their findings.

Craig Baxter has a very deep sight over the political contours of Pakistan and he wrote over the different issues in which the issue of election is my interest. In the article Pakistan Vote---1970 he analyzed the voting phenomenon by capitalizing the objects of political parties and their election issues to mobilize the voters and entice them for their political attachments with the political objects. In general he stressed more over the established patterns and norms of politico-administrative setup in which the phenomenon of election was to be held. He indeed tried to express the people’s participation in the voting process by the force of political set-up, not the pull and push effects of traditional and primordial factors. His judgment about the voters’ behavior was sound enough …the voters of west Pakistan did not follow the conventional judgment of prognosticators who had predicted that the traditional leaders—the so called “Old Guard”—would resume the political leadership they had exercised before…. (Craig Baxter, 1970). He further stated it by the explanation of the election results in which people gave sweeping verdict in favour of Awami League and Pakistan Peoples Party on the basis of the election program. The results of elections made it clear to him that the older order had changed… that the politicization of the countryside had progressed much farther than expected, and that many urban dwellers were ready to seek radical solutions to his problems. The influence of major landlords was no longer the dominant factor in Punjab politics and the bradri (‘brotherhood’) of cast and tribal connections controlling the vote had broken down. He counted these observations without giving any data which had been collected through survey of the constituency or the analysis of constituency results where political and social determinants were operative.

Norman D.Palmer in his book Elections and Political Development: The South Asian Experience, described normatively about the elections of Pakistan in chronological way from the provincial elections 1937 of subcontinent to the 1970 elections of Pakistan. He gave some of the general features of electoral politics in which the involvement of voter in electoral process is based according to the level of his/her attachment with the different political entities and the influence of some of ecological factors to formulate the opinion about voting. He talked about the hierarchy of political involvement in terms of the level of activities i.e., association with political objects may be more suitable for the analysis of elections. The primacy was also given to political objects in evaluating the political participation of voters in some political systems than in others. He talked about various level of political participation roughly corresponding to the four classifications—Apathetic, spectator activities, transitional activities and gladiatorial activities (Norman D.Palmer, 1975, p.62). This model of political involvement was first presented by Lester
W Milbrath -1965 in his book *political participation*. Seemingly he did not employ such kind of tools to observe and analyze the political behaviour of the voters of Pakistan.

Hierarchy of Political Involvement: Apathetic; Spectator Activities; Transitional Activities; Gladiatorial Activities

**Gladiatorial Activities:** Holding public or party office; being candidate for office; soliciting political funds; attending caucus or a strategy meeting; being an active member in a political party; contributing time in a political campaign

**Transitional Activities:** Attending a political meeting and rally; making a monetary contribution to a party or candidate; contacting a political leadership

**Spectator Activities:** Putting a sticker on a car; attempting to talk another into voting a certain way; initiating a political discussion voting

**Apathetic:** Exposing oneself to Political Stimuli

M.G. Weinbaum in his article ‘The March 1977 Elections in Pakistan: Where Everyone Lost’, gave analysis about the role of political parties in the elections which relied more on the weaknesses of each other’s political axis. These alignments were developed before the election to muster the support of the voters. Pakistan Peoples Party relied on the support of traditional rural families to counter the strategy of opposition which had constituted an alliance of nine parties in the name of Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). He described that Pakistan Peoples Party in its election campaign relied on its past gains which it tried to deliver the masses through effective structural changes while opposition stressed on the Islamic revivalism. In this description author realized that voters had political consciousness but they had been mobilized in the electoral activity by the socially stigmatized variables. So he appreciated the level of political consciousness in which political variables and media had played their role but he could not count on it for his analysis of the election 1977 (M.G. Weinbaum, 1977). Rasul Baksh Rais gave his views on the elections 1985 which were conducted by Zia regime on non-party basis in his article “Elections in Pakistan: Is Democracy Winning” that interplay of traditional forces had an overawed influence in determining the electoral decisions. He said that…party less nature of elections and the ban on traditional means of electioneering prevented debate on national issues…for that reason, the election campaign in rural areas were dominated by local issues, the personal influence of the
candidate, the ties to clan, tribe or biradri and feudal social bases in particular largely determined the outcome of elections (Rasul Baksh Rais, 1985). His analysis was lack of empirical evidence that should be supported by quantitative data. So his interpretation was more normative.

Another name renowned for his intellectual worth and expertise over the politics of Pakistan is Lawrence Ziring who also discussed the issue of election in his different research articles. His frame of discussing the election is not very much different from other scholars. He gave considerable weight to the political determinants like political parties, leaders of the parties and their programs in the election 1977 to judge and evaluate the issue of electoral activity but could not fix the impact of any factor in their interplay on the system. In the article “Pakistan: The Campaign Before the Storm” he evaluated the event of election campaign of parties in the established political set up which indicates more of wrangling and conflict between the last office bearer party and on the other side of the spectrum, the coalition of opposition forces which tried to let down their each other agenda. He categorically missed the influence of traditional and modern values over the decision of voters and he did not provide an empirical evidence to support his generalization about the role of parties in mobilizing the masses (Lawrence Ziring, 1977).

In his second article which was written after sixteen years of the previous one gave methodological a better image in which he discussed the issue of 1993 election with the juxtaposition of the political events to depict the institutional strength of different interrelated institutions to affect the outcome of election. He presented the institutional conflict which sapped the administrative capacity of the state and plunged it into governability crisis. In this political scenario he described the role of political parties and their leaders in electoral activity. He stated that people rejected the agenda of those parties which played over the tune of religion or any other hollow ideological euphemism. Two major parties got maximum share of the peoples vote. He supported this argument with the vote of two major parties—Pakistan Peoples Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz—that was 38% and 41% respectively. He analyzed the participation of the people in the election on the basis of agenda and appeal which political parties issued in their electoral manifesto. So here again he judged it that erstwhile Muajir Quami Movement (it was named as Muttahida Quami Movement in 1990) boycotted the national poll in Sind and voter turn out was around 8% in Karachi where this political party had a overawed influence while MQM decided to contest the provincial poll in which turn out in Karachi was 70%. This kind of analysis of author projected the influence of each factor either it was social (traditional influences) or political (orientation to political objects which lead to political preferences) to understand the phenomenon of election and to pass the opinion about the level of political development (Lawrence Ziring, 1993).

Charles H. Kennedy who in one of his article ‘The Politics of Ethnicity in Sindh’ gave his view over the patterns of electoral voting in 1988 that it was more pliant to ethnic biases due to its divide between Muahjir Quami Movement (MQM) having strength in the urban areas of Karachi and Hyderabad and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) which is the voice of rural Sindh (Charles H. Kennedy, 1991). So people are more prone to their traditional biases and attachments instead of relieving themselves from the undue burden of malign tendencies which hinder the growth of free liberal ideas and
M. Javaid Akhtar, Sajid Mahmood Awan, Shuja-ul-Haq

Kennedy is not taking into account the importance of non-political factors which influence the voting pattern or the voting may not be in any significant manner related to the pursuit of interests.

Muhammad Waseem has described some of the reasons for the paucity of research on the electoral politics of Pakistan. The most striking reason which he has cited is that in Pakistan there is decline of social sciences and dearth of intellectual depth in conducting research in this sphere (Muhammad Waseem, 1994). Muhammad Waseem took up the study of electoral politics of Pakistan with the difference of methodology in interpreting the dynamics and trends of this phenomenon. He has taken the elections as a legitimizing factor in governance and transfer of authority because it carries the mass mandate. His two exclusive works on elections provide better description on the historical and institutional factors in determining the fate of democracy. Here his work The 1993 Elections in Pakistan is under analysis to know the intellectual depth of his study. He described about the institutional constraints before going into the study of elections which affect its output. He observes that ‘…out of the two components [military & bureaucracy] of the British heritage of ‘tutelary democracy’, the constitutional tradition based on rule of public representatives was put in abeyance…(Muhammad Waseem, 1994). He has concluded that people of Pakistan participate actively in electoral activity due to their increasing sense of knowing the importance of the delivery system. He judged the importance of political mobilization due to rapid transformation of society and gave his explanatory details regarding the formation and functioning of the government in the wake of election. He made his observation on the basis of traditionally demarcated constituencies, role of parties, the electoral strength of political parties and the role of local leadership. Yet, he did not analyze the impact of indices of modernization and of primordial influences on voting. Much of his study is based on the antecedents of elections—focused on legal and constitutional issues rather than on sociological analysis of the people’s political, cultural and sociological attitudes relating to their electoral choices.

He concluded in his book The 1993 Elections in Pakistan that “Pakistani voter is passive not only because he was confused about the party profiles but also because he remained immobilized”(Muhammad Waseem, 1994). Here it can be questioned why a healthy proportion of voter is ready to go for vote which is visible from the turn out of four general elections (1988-1997) of the national and provincial assemblies and why they preferred to vote for parties and not for independent candidates?

Andrew R. Wilder also mentioned the lacking of material on electoral politics of Pakistan and he cited Muhammad Waseem in providing this excuse. He assessed the available material for the requirement of his research design and has developed a strong framework by which he has analyzed the electoral data available in the form of electoral reports published by the Election Commission of Pakistan. He also conducted the interview to collect the qualitative data and has got his hypotheses verified. His generalizations show that political determinants of voting behaviour such as party identification in urban areas and patronage orientation in rural areas are growing in importance relative to social determinants (Andrew R. Wilder, 1999). He seems to be right in his second argument where he is convinced for the trend of paternalistic kind of politics due to the role of influential personals in their constituencies.
VI. Conclusion:

It has been found that in evaluation of electoral behavior of Pakistan’s voters neither a single social scientist tried to hire any kind of approach or model or neither have they been succeeded to construct any design to evaluate the behavior. They not even mentioned about the word ‘psephology’ used for the study of elections. It indicates their naïveté’s in the field of electoral study. Electoral politics has been taken as a field of research in the perspective of systemic theory in which politics has been treated as a subsystem of social system. Social scientist in the realm of politics has had explicit methodological concerns and implicit methodological awareness but point is that why they are lacking in the application of research tools on this field of research which have got specialization in the domain of political science and is now being accepted as a subfield of it.

Nature of Pakistani voters’ behaviour can best possibly be evaluated through the analysis of results of elections by taking into the theoretical approaches—Columbia, Michigan and Rational Schools— for the better evaluation of the political behaviour of the Pakistani voter. It can also help to assess the sustaining spirit of the system by taking into account the interplay of political determinants like leaders, candidate, issue, voter and the political party. It has been found that neither any schools’ paradigm has been used to evaluate the electoral behavior of voters of Pakistan. There was lacking on the part of social scientists to use a quantitative method to approach the problem of election and voters’ electoral decision. But all which has been described by the social scientists is simple narration and interpretation of data or some factual evidence.

Alas the study of elections and electoral behavior has not been designed by the social scientists to determine the nature of correlation between different variables which are most important to understand the phenomenon except Andrew wilder. The relationship among dependent and independent variables permits partial systematic control of the research design and it leads to the limitation of the research. In Pakistan welter of electoral data accumulated in the form of elections results which had not been evaluated for the knowing influence of the variables to challenge the different hyperbolic statements and descriptive generalizations about the political culture of Pakistan and about the level of political development.

They treated the field of electoral politics as per routine of general description with its historical and interpretative mode without putting into the exercise of logic and method of empirical science. It may be the intended result of their analysis which has not felt the requirement of theory formulation or its explanation. But their hypothetical study was contingent upon the analysis of total range of political system workable in the context of Pakistan.

Here it could be in the realm of suggestions that our researcher should contribute to conscious thinking in the field of politics by focusing on the methods of political
inquiry which are case studies, comparative approach, grounded theory and other appendages of them to establish general empirical propositions. It is true that all this is based on probabilities and possibilities and effort is to reach near approximation. Their political knowledge shapes their theoretical truth towards what is politically appropriate rather than towards what is scientifically operational. So social scientists in analyzing Pakistan’s elections seemingly lacked a capacity to provide the basis for valid generalization or nor the ground for disproving an established generalization.

References:


